



Business Talk, A UH SBDC Star Member E-Newsletter

August 2010

Spotlight on SBDC Client:
V&E Cleaning Services... Living the American Dream!



Pulling up roots and moving to a new city can be tough. But moving from another country – now that’s a challenge! Not only do you have to adapt to a new culture but in many cases learn a new language too. And, if you want to start a business you also have to learn how to deal with the local, state and federal requirements – which can be even more overwhelming.

Veronica and Efren Rubio began their U.S. journey over two years ago. They both owned and operated businesses in Mexico, but wanted to pursue better opportunities. Since they already had business relationships in

Houston, they decided to make the Bayou City their new home.

When their initial idea to purchase a franchise did not pan out, they decided to instead start a cleaning services business from scratch. Although business ownership was not foreign to them, they wanted to be sure to move forward the right way. One of the first steps they took was to join the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. They recognized what a valuable resource the chamber would be – access to business connections, education, and networking. They quickly learned that one of the services the chamber offered to their members was on-site access to the University of Houston Small Business Development Center’s Senior Business Consultant, Carmen Strong, who could help them with the business start-up process. They began meeting with Carmen at the chamber offices and were soon ready to launch their business.

Veronica and Efren say, “It was very important for us to start the right way. We had a written business plan in place but we knew that doing business here is very different from Latin America. Carmen was bilingual and understood the cross country cultural differences. She helped us with the process and all the steps – from business planning to web site development to the legal requirements to set up a new business. Without her help, we

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Featured Seminars:

Houston Inventor's Association
 August 11th
 5:00 – 9:00 pm



Designing Your Credit Policy
 August 17th
 9:00 am – Noon



Doing Business with Harris County
 August 25th
 9:00 am - 10:30 am



would not have achieved our goal – to start a business in the U.S.”

[V&E Cleaning Services](#) was launched in 2009 to serve both the residential and commercial markets. Through hard work the Rubios have built a solid customer base in their first year of business, all through word-of-mouth and direct referrals. They have established themselves as a cleaning service “specializing in the details” – no more missed cobwebs or dust bunnies in the corners. With a real passion for cleanliness, V&E offers 24/7 services and uses environmentally friendly products. They have recently added carpet cleaning to the premium list of services they offer.

Read about other [successful small business clients](#) and how the University of Houston Small Business Development Center helped them realize their dreams.

8 Ways to Make Social Marketing Work for You

Facebook. YouTube. LinkedIn. Twitter. FourSquare. The new digital universe is based on the concept of user-generated content combined with continuous interactivity and connectedness. The result? A huge number of people are constantly attached to the Web, their smartphones, and each other. And as any good marketer will tell you, any time millions of people are communicating, a marketing opportunity exists. Here are 8 tips on getting started in social marketing.

1. Know your audience. Do they use social media? If so, which sites?
2. Once you have decided what type of social media you'll use, pay attention to what's being said out there – about your industry, your product or service, and about you.
3. Don't let social media eat up all of your time. Limit the number of hours you spend updating your sites each week.
4. Stick with it! Update your sites regularly. New content on your blog, for example, not only creates interest, it moves you up higher in search engine results.
5. Understand that online activities can come with pitfalls. Most notably unfavorable comments - not all of them even fair or honest.
6. Encourage satisfied prospects to post. Be careful not to provide them with any kind of payment or incentive to do so, however, since this will likely get you kicked off of the site.
7. Clarify inaccurate comments. If you read a comment you know to be untrue, add your clarification to the postings. But never get into an online spat – this will make you look bad.
8. Keep experimenting. With the Web itself continually evolving, so too are the marketing opportunities it presents.

From The Planning Shop Report, a monthly business planning newsletter from Rhonda Abrams. Rhonda is Founder and CEO of

Visit us on the Web!
Login online to access special features only available to Star Members, or tell a colleague about the vital business information and expert assistance they can find at the UH Small Business Development Center.



The UH SBDC is a center of the University of Houston SBDC Network. The UH SBDC Network serves 32 counties in Southeast Texas. SBDC programs are nondiscriminatory and available to individuals with disabilities. Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. The University of Houston is an EEO/AA institution. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Contact UH SBDC at 713-752-8488 for accommodations.

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[The Planning Shop](#), and the author of numerous books including *The Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies*. She is also a nationally syndicated columnist on small business strategies.



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